

Things I Love (Part 2: My God)

Opening Prayer, Confession of Faith & Worship

Big Idea:

Being a Christian is not simply a label; rather, it is an all-in proposition of total commitment because we are called to love God with everything that is in us.

Summary:

Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God with ALL of our heart, ALL of our mind, ALL of our soul, and ALL of our strength. He didn't tell us to love God with some of our heart, half of our mind, or most of our soul and strength. God wants it all and He deserves it all. After all, He gave us His all. However, even in our deep desire to give Him our everything, we find that we sometimes fall short; we discover gaps. These gaps in our lives are the distances between what we say and what we do; what we project and who we really are. The good news is that when we are truly submitted to God's will, we will see the gaps in our lives begin to close. This is the greatness of God's powerful grace – in Him all things are made new, the crooked paths are made straight, and the gaps are closed.

What are the gaps and how do we close them? **(1) The commitment gap:** This is the gap between our professed values and our actual behavior—what we say and what we actually do. This gap exists when we relate to God on our terms instead of His terms. **(2) The Passion Gap:** This is the gap that develops when our knowledge of God increases and our interaction with God diminishes. Our heads grow large and our hearts shrink small. It happens when we allow the cares of life to choke out our passion for God. It happens when we don't fully give God our whole heart. **(3) The Emotional Gap:** This Gap opens up when we allow an emotional distance to develop between us and God; when we become distracted by the pride of life, the love of riches and the cares of life. **(4) The Knowledge Gap:** This Gap opens up when we believe what religion says about God rather than accepting what He says about Himself in His Word. It occurs when we don't think Biblically about all matters of life. **(5) The Priorities Gap:** This gap exists when what we do doesn't match up with what we say we believe. Christianity must be fully lived out. We must love Him in all that we do. Closing these gaps requires complete abandonment to God. It requires making Christ our only hope. It requires a desire to know Him, a sincere trust in Him, obedience to Him, and a commitment to live in His strength.

Discussion Questions: (read the scriptures & discuss)

John 3:16, Romans 5:8 & 1 John 4:7-10

How much does God love you? How much of Himself did He give in order to express His love for you? How does the reality of God's "all-in" love for you affect you?

Mark 12:28-31, Matthew 22:37 & Deuteronomy 6:4-6

- Give examples of how we love God with (1) all of our heart, (2) all of our mind, (3) all of our soul, and (4) all of our strength.
- What would a person's life look like if they followed these commandments?
- What things are creating gaps in your love for God?
- What are some Biblically-based, practical ways to close those gaps?
- Share how you have seen gaps close as you are growing in your love for God?

Taking Action: Prayerfully ask God to reveal the gaps in your love for Him. Do not allow these gaps be a means for the enemy to bring condemnation, rather call upon God's grace and meditate on His Word so that you may start finding victory in these areas as you go all-in with your love for Him

Ministry Time

LifeGroups